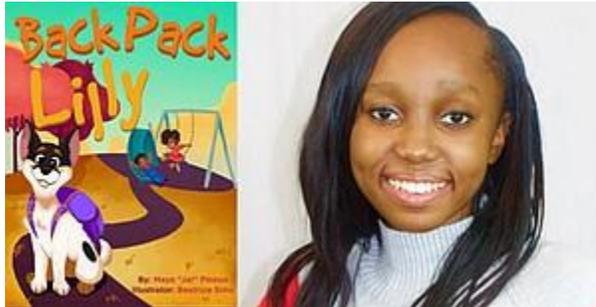




Story by Stacy M. Brown

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Maya Jai Pinson has some seriously sound advice for young people: “Be committed in what you’re doing, follow your dreams and never give up. Be consistent in everything, be passionate, be open-minded, open-armed and just have fun.”

When the 14-year-old was asked if she is having fun, the question was more rhetorical, particularly after an inspiring telephone conversation with Maya, who at a young age has accomplished about as much as anyone twice her age and older.

“Yes, I do have fun,” she said.

“My mom and dad motivate me and I just love motivating people and inspiring people,” said Maya, who among so many other interests has written a children’s book called “Back Pack Lilly,” an entertaining read for ages three to nine. “My book is teaching kids how to prioritize their studying and school work.”

It was Maya’s mother, an author herself, who inspired the teen to write the book.

With a daily schedule that seemingly never ends, Maya knows quite a bit about prioritizing. Her list of activities includes:

- Acting with more than 14 titles including starring in a new comedy series called, “Dad’s Do it Too.”
- Maryland talk show radio co-host of the teen program, “Voices of Our Teens”
- Children's book author “Back Pack Lilly” for children 3-9 years old
- Motivational speaker whose “Dream Big” speech is for kids and teens
- GPA Honor Student (3.9 GPA)
- Read over 3 million words this past school year

- 1st chair cellist
- Basketball, volley ball captains and more.
- Volunteers by reading to day care centers, YMCA's, Boys & Girls Centers and she reads at the National Children Medical Center Hospitals.
- Prepares meals and sandwiches at churches, food kitchens and other locations for those in need.

“School work comes first, and I make sure that my studying work and my grades are good before I do any extracurricular activities,” Maya said. “I also have a schedule where everything is planned on a calendar, so I have time to study and then relax and have fun.”

While her book is a tool to help children prioritize studying, schoolwork and play, Maya has won awards as a motivational speaker where she says she enjoys giving talks that inspire young ones. Her radio show is also a platform to inspire young people.

“It gives kids a platform to get their voice heard on certain topics,” she said. “Young people aren’t always comfortable speaking with adults and the show gives them a chance to say what’s on their minds.”

As co-host of a Maryland radio show called “Voices of Our Teens,” Maya says she finds time to speak to children and adults alike about the importance of balancing work and play in their lives with her “Stop, Drop, Work then Play” method.

The radio show, which aired every third Sunday of each month from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. on WOL 1450 AM and 95.9 FM News Talk Radio, has tackled such topics as teens coping with their parents’ divorce; teenage and young adult pregnancy; teen dating; and youth bullying. The show is expected to end in January.

In addition to all of things she enjoys, Maya lists her niece, Janiya; her older sister and brother, Brittany and DJ; as those she loves spending time with.

“Mom and dad are just that, mom and dad,” she said laughing. “They are more behind the scenes and they prefer it that way.”

If Maya had to choose a first love in all that she does, she says it would be acting.

“I love portraying another role and I love being on camera,” she said. “In the future I see myself as a big star, a featured actress but still writing books on the side and still motivating people and helping others.”

It’s easy to see why her mother describes her as “resilient, hardworking responsible, respectful and caring, and silly,” she said.

Her dad also said Maya is loving, caring, respectful and he added “athletic and fun.”

For more about Maya or to purchase “Back Pack Lilly,” visit <https://mjaip.com/>